

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Congressman John Conyers, Jr.**

**Fourteenth District, Michigan  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

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### **CONYERS CALLS ARMEY AMENDMENT A SPECIAL INTEREST GIFT TO NEGLIGENT AIRPORT SCREENING COMPANIES**

Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee issued the following statement regarding his strong opposition to the Arney amendment to the Homeland Security legislation:

“This amendment includes highly objectionable and controversial language that would immunize airport screening companies whose negligence contributed to the September 11 terrorist hijackings. It has nothing to do with homeland security, was not in the Administration’s proposal, and is nothing less than a special interest gift to the airport screening companies.

Under the amendment, the security companies responsible for providing staff at Logan Airport on September 11, would receive liability protection. Even the notorious airport screening company Argenbright, which provided security at Dulles and Newark airports and has been cited for more security violations than any other company, would benefit under the Arney language.

Although the Arney language adds a new provision specifying that air carriers do not include “debarred” firms, such as Argenbright, their debarment will be lifted in less than three months. That means any victim of the September 11 tragedy whose family files a lawsuit against Argenbright for their negligence after October 22 will have their damages limited by the Arney amendment.

Even worse, the amendment would also limit the liability of Securicor – which acquired Argenbright’s assets -- since they are not barred from any federal contracts. That means that Argenbright’s corporate parent will be totally shielded from liability for letting terrorists and terrorist weapons through checkpoints on September 11.

Its amazing to me that the Republican Leadership would use this homeland security bill as a vehicle to harm the victims of the September 11 terrorist attack, yet that is precisely what this amendment does.

Last year, when we passed the Aviation Security Act, we expressly decided that private screening companies should not be relieved of liability. This is because as we evaluated airline security in the wake of September 11, it was obvious that the private companies conducting airline screening had done a woefully inadequate job. Some screening companies were criminally convicted for falsely certifying that they had made criminal background checks of their employees and for knowingly hiring convicted felons.

With all of the concern about corporate accountability, the last thing we need to do is pass a special interest law which protects negligent airport screening companies at the expense of the victims of the September 11 tragedy.”